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**BORDER BALLADS**



# **BORDER BALLADS**

BY

**ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE**

Edited by **THOMAS J. WISE**



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## PREFATORY NOTE

Among the by no means numerous manuscripts left by Swinburne unpublished at the time of his death, were a series of seven Border Ballads.

To the end that these delightful and important Ballads should be immediately and permanently preserved in type, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton caused about twenty or so to be privately printed in London in pamphlet form, with suitable Introductions by himself. It is by Mr. Watts-Dunton's courtesy that The Bibliophile Society has now been enabled to reprint them for distribution among its members.

"Swinburne," wrote Mr. Watts-Dunton, "being a Northumbrian to the very marrow, was steeped in the Border Ballads to such an extent that it was almost impossible to

quote any verse of any Border Ballad that was unfamiliar to him. It is an interesting fact, indeed, that his very first poetic effusions took this form. Rossetti used to say that if the knowledge of all the specialists in this line were put together they would not equal that of 'his little Northumbrian friend.' *The Bride's Tragedy* and *The Ballad of Dead Men's Bay* are in an entirely different style, and without the archaic note."

A further tribute to the power of Swinburne as a ballad-writer has thus been given by Dr. Edmund Gosse: "To compare his ballads with other eighteenth and nineteenth century imitations, is to see how far Swinburne soared above all competitors in the skill which makes plausible this form of *Pastiche*."

T. J. W.

**LORD SOULIS**





## Lord Poulin

Lord Poulin is a keen wizard,

A wizard nicker of lean:

Who cometh in bond of Lord Poulin,  
<sup>through his heart, right little</sup>  
~~He looks with~~ with wild cheer.

He has three baw castles to his hand,

That wizard nicker of eggs;

The first of Estress, the last of Westress,

The middle of Hermitage.

He has three fair ways into his hand,

The least is good to see;  
~~good~~

The first is Sunset, the second is Sunset,

The third is Morning.

The first o' them has a golden crown,

He wears a golden ring;

<sup>ma' ~~of~~ ~~gold~~ her about</sup>  
The third has ~~scant~~ of the goodly gold,

He has a number thing.



## LORD SOULIS

### A BALLAD

Lord Soulis is a keen wizard,  
A wizard mickle of lear:  
Who cometh in bond of Lord Soulis,  
Thereof he hath little cheer.

He has three braw castles to his hand,  
That wizard mickle of age;  
The first of Estness, the last of Westness,  
The middle of Hermitage.

He has three fair mays into his hand,  
The least is good to see;  
The first is Annet, the second is Janet,  
The third is Marjorie.

The firsten o' them has a gowden crown,  
The neist has a gowden ring;  
The third has sma' gowd her about,  
She has a sweeter thing.

The firsten o' them has a rose her on,  
The neist has a marigold;  
The third of them has a better flower,  
The best that springeth ower wold.

The kisses that are her mouth within,  
There is no man knoweth of any one;  
She is a pure maid of her body,  
The best that standeth under sun.

And Estness was a bonny castle,  
It stood upon a sea;  
The green for Annet, the yellow for Janet,  
The brown for Marjorie.

And Westness was a bonny castle,  
It lay upon a lea;  
Red wine for Annet, and white for Janet,  
And water for Marjorie.

But Hermitage is a fair castle,  
The fairest of the three ;  
Saft beds for Annet, silk sheets for Janet,  
Nane sheets for Marjorie.

He made them a' by strong cunning,  
That wizard great of hand ;  
The twain to fall at his life's ending,  
The third alway to stand.

He made them a' by hell's cunning,  
That wizard full of ill ;  
They burnt up Estness and cast down Westness  
But Hermitage standeth still.

There be twenty lords in that border,  
Full twenty strong lords and three,  
They have sworn an oath for Lord Soulis,  
Weel wroken of him to be.

They have set a meeting at Emmethaugh  
And upon the Lilienshaw,  
They will be wroken of Lord Soulis,  
His body to hang and draw.

They have broken bread between them a'  
At Ottershawe that's ower the lea,  
They wad plunder Estness and harry Westness,  
But Hermitage they let be.

They watered steeds by the wan Wellhaugh  
Under the sweet leaves green ;  
Frae the Yethburn head to Christenbury,  
To ride they were full keen.

When they were come to the Yethburn spait,  
I wot their knees were wet ;  
When they were come to the Yethburn head,  
There was no porter at tha yett.

When they had won to the Bloody-bush,  
I wot their sides were sair :  
Before they were well upon that border  
They had mickle sorrow and care.  
“ O gin we were at the sweet Wellhaugh,  
Under the merry leaves fair ! ”



Before they were well on the other side  
He set a sair cast them between  
“ O gin we were by the Emmetburn  
Under the little leaves green,  
Between the birks and the Emmet water,  
We had the lesser been.”

When they came on that weary border,  
He sent an ill thing them amang;  
“ We winna ride ower to Hermitage,  
The wa's they are too strang;  
But we will ride to the low castles,  
Though the ways be ill to gang.”

Out then spak Burd Marjorie's lover,  
He was a fair man of his face;  
“ Gin I may be wroken of Lord Soulis  
I have sma' care of my place;

“ Gin I may be wroken of Lord Soulis  
I have sma' care of ony thing;  
Of the wine for shedding, the sheets for wedding,  
The kirk for christening.

“ I have sma’ care of my sad body  
Upon the ground to gang;  
Gin I wist where I might be wroken of him  
I wad give it to him strang.”

Out then spak may Janet’s brother,  
He was a stout knight and a keen;  
“ He has sent his devils us amang  
To work us trouble and teen.

“ Gin I wist where I might be wroken of him,  
Betwixen dark and day,  
I wad give baith my soul and body  
To hell to fetch away.”

Out then spak Burd Annet’s father,  
He was a good man full of age;  
“ Ye’ll speir at Estness, ye’ll speir at Westness,  
But no at Hermitage.”

They turned their horse-heads round about,  
Rode low down by the sand;  
And a’ the way they went upon,  
The devil went at their hand.



The first castle they came to,  
It stood upon a sea ;  
The least worth chamber in a' that castle,  
It was a' whalestooth and sandal-tree.

“ O whatten a may is yonder may,  
Sae fair to see upon? ”

“ O yonder is my daughter Annet,  
Out of my ha's was gone.

“ Gin ye'll come hither to me, Annet,  
God's grace of me ye'se have.”

“ I wadna gang out, my auld fool father,  
Gin ye were graithed in your grave.”

“ Give me three kisses, my daughter Annet,  
Before my mouth is cold.”

“ I winna come forth for nae man's grey beard,  
'Till my bairn be a sennight old.”

He turned his face against the sea,  
His heart brak right atwain ;

“ The fire of hell for your body, Annet,  
Ere ye behold me again.”

" Pull off the green, and the goodly green,  
Put on the black, the black,  
For my father is ridden to Wearyland,  
I doubt he'll never win back."

They turned their horse-heads round about,  
Rode high upon a hill;  
And a' the gate they gaed about,  
The devil them garred gang ill.

The neister castle they came to,  
It was hard upon the low champaign;  
The least woth bower in a' that castle,  
It was a' white siller and green stane.

" O whatten a may is yonder may  
That is sae great of her body? "

" O yonder is my sister Janet,  
Was stolen by night frae me.

" Gin ye'll come hither to me, Janet,  
God's love of me ye'se hae."

" I wadna gang out for aye, brither,  
Though ye were dead the day."

“ O ye’ll gang down to me, Janet,  
For God’s sweet mercy and mine ;  
For I have sought ye the lang lands ower,  
These eight months wearing nine.”

“ I winna gang forth for nae brither,  
Though his body should be lorn ;  
I winna gang forth for nae man’s face,  
Till Lord Soulis’ bairn be born.”

He turned his face against the brigg,  
His heart brak right in three ;  
“ The sorrow of hell for you, Janet,  
And the warld’s sorrow for me.”

“ Take down the red, and the bonny red,  
Set up the black, the black :  
For my brother is ridden to Wearieswood,  
I wot he’ll never win back.”

They turned their horse-heads round about,  
Rode back a day and twain :  
And a’ the rivers they rode upon  
The devil rode at their rein.

The third castle they came to,  
It was the castle of Hermitage ;  
There is nae man may break the sides of it,  
Though the stanes therein are great of age.

“ O whatten a may is yonder may,  
That looks like ony flower? ”  
“ O yon is my very love, Marjorie,  
Was borne out of my bower.”

The bower Lady Marjorie was in,  
It had neither white cloths nor red,  
There were nae rushes to the bower floors,  
And nae pillows to the bed.

“ O will ye come down but a very little,  
For God’s sake or for me?  
Or will ye kiss me a very little,  
But six poor kissess and three? ”

She’s leaned hersell to that window,  
For sorrow she couldna stand ;  
She’s bound her body by that window,  
With iron at her hand.

(11)  
His downy hair by long tree & by tree's leaf,  
By air & breeze & corn,  
Gave ye his downy <sup>come meet</sup> ~~ribbons~~ for <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ right, "he says,"  
"I had been but dead the morn."

And forth is come that foul wizard,  
God give him <sup>a life</sup> ~~earth~~ & care!

Says - "the life is one time sweet to have  
And the death is three times pain."

Forth is come that strong wizard,  
God give him a heavy day!

Says - "ye shall have joy of your human's body  
When April come he after May."

Between the hill & the river water

In fields that were full sweet  
was riding & running together,  
Those ~~were~~ ~~had~~ ~~at~~ ~~leaves~~

And many a man got red-shod feet

Between the waves & the river's large water

In ways that were waxen red  
There was clearing of caps & shearing of jacks,  
And many a good man was there dead





She's sworn by tree and by tree's leaf,  
By aits and rye and corn,  
"Gin ye hadna come the night," she says,  
"I had been but dead the morn."

She's kissed him under the bower-bar  
Nine goodly times and ten;  
And forth is come that keen wizard  
In the midst of his men.

And forth is come that foul wizard,  
God give him a curse and care!  
Says "The life is one time sweet to have  
And the death is three times sair."

Forth is come that strong wizard,  
God give him a heavy day!  
Says "ye shall have joy of your leman's body  
When April cometh after May."

Between the hill and the wan water  
In fields that were full sweet,  
There was riding and running together,  
And many a man gat red-shod feet.

Between the wa's and the Hermitage water,  
In ways that were waxen red  
There was cleaving of caps and shearing of jack,  
And many a good man was there dead.

They have taken that strong wizard  
To bind him by the hands:  
The links of airn brast off his body  
Like splints of bursten birken wands.

And they have taken that keen wizard  
To bind him by the hause-bane;  
The links of airn brast off his body  
As blossom that is burst wi' rain.

And they have taken that foul wizard  
To bind him by the feet:  
The links of airn brast off his body  
As berries that are burst with heat.

They have putten fire upon his flesh,  
For nae fire wad it shrink:  
They have casten his body in the wan well-head,  
For nae water wad it sink.



Up then gat the fiend Borolallie  
Bade them give ower and let be :  
“ Between warld’s fire and warld’s water  
He gat a gift of me ;  
Till fire came out of wan water,  
There’s nane shall gar him dee.”

“ A rede, a rede, thou foul Borolallie,  
A good rede out of hand ;  
Shall we be wroken of Lord Soulis  
By water or by land?  
Or shall we be wroken a great way off,  
Or even whereas we stand? ”

And up it spak him, foul Borolallie,  
Between the tree and the leaf o’ the tree ;  
“ Ye maunna be wroken of Lord Soulis  
By land neither by sea ;  
Between red fire and wan water  
Weel wroken ye shall be.”

And up it spak him, foul Borolallie,  
Between Lord Soulis and them a':  
" Ye maunna be wroken of Lord Soulis  
Betwixen house and ha';  
But ye maun take him to the Ninestane rigs  
And take his life awa.' "

They have take him to the Ninestane rigs  
His foul body to slay;  
Between the whins and the whinstanes  
He had a weary way.

They have taken him to the Ninestane rigs  
His foul body to spill:  
Between the green broom and the yellow  
He gat a bitter ill.

They had a sair cast with his foul body,  
There was nae man wist what to do;  
" And O gin his body were weel sodden,  
Weel sodden and suppit in broo! "

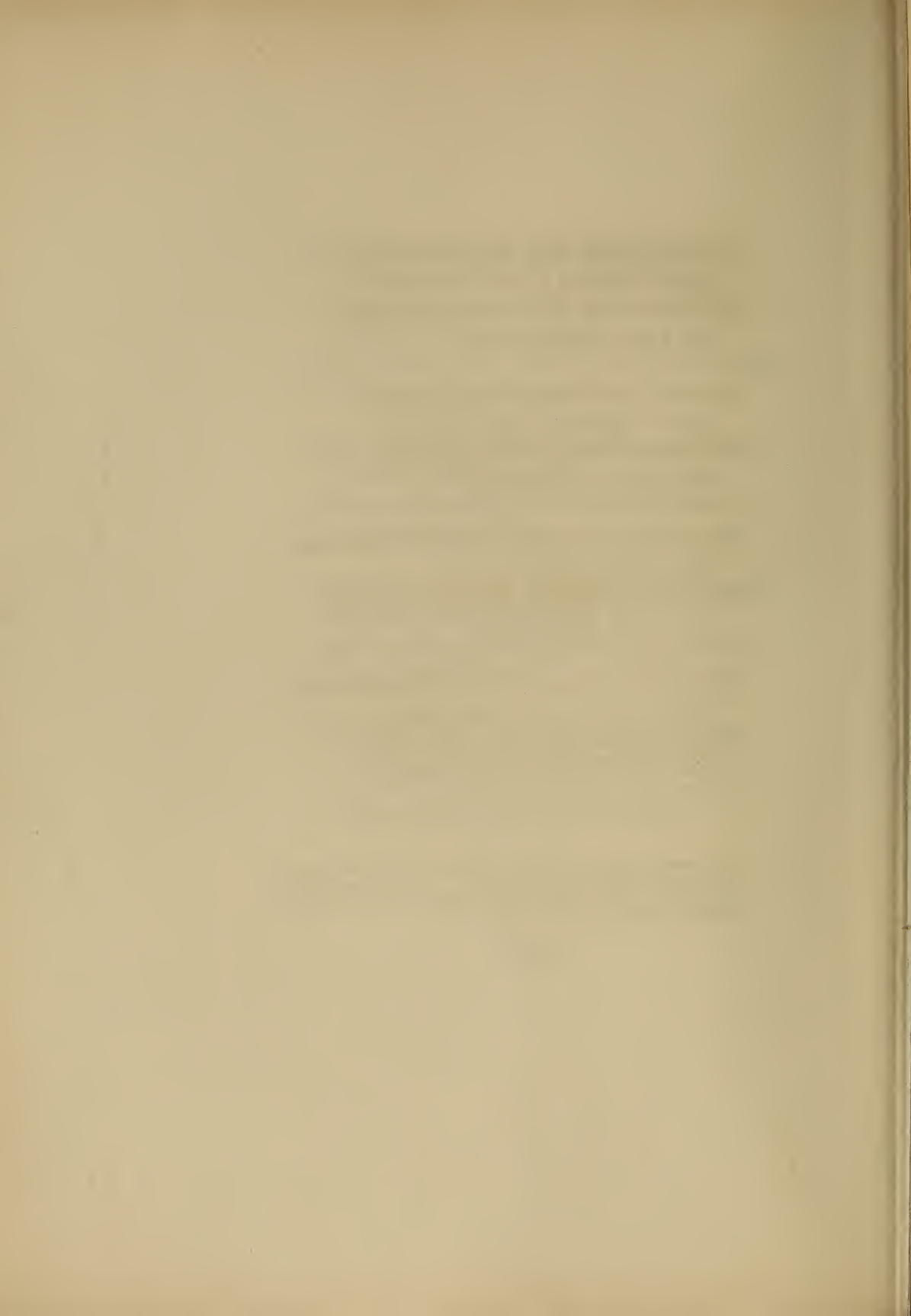
And out is spak him, foul Borolallie,  
Says "whatten a coil's this coil?  
Ye'll mak a fire on the Ninestane rigs,  
For a pot thereon to boil."

And out it spak him, foul Borolallie,  
Says "whatten a din's this din?  
Ye'll boil his body within the brass,  
The brass to boil him in."

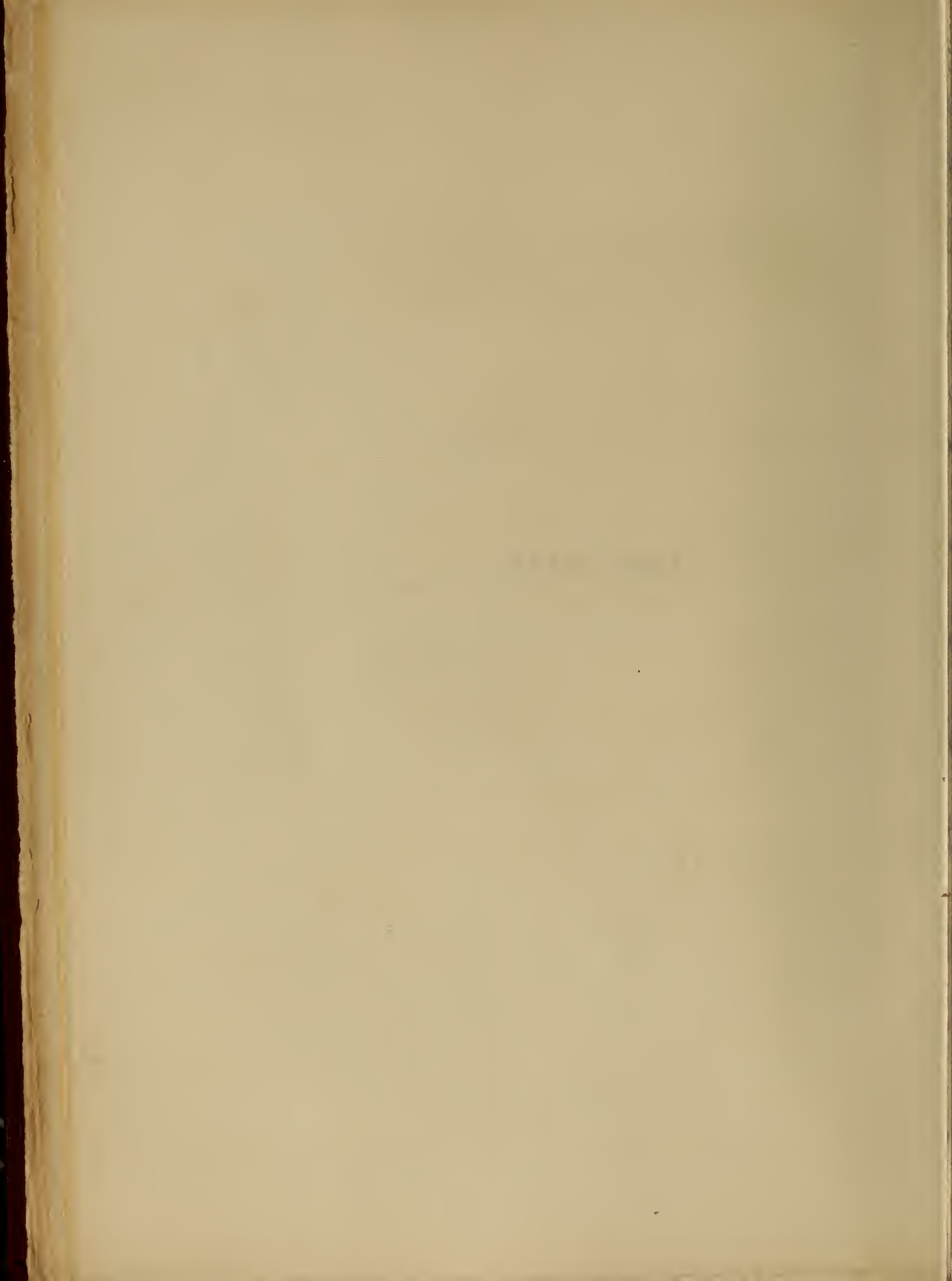
They boiled his body on the Ninestane rigs  
That wizard mickle of lear;  
They have sodden the bones of his body,  
To be their better cheer.

They buried his bones on the Ninestane rigs  
But the flesh was a' clean gane;  
There was great joy in a' that border  
That Lord Soulis was well slain.

The tradition of Lord Soulis being boiled alive (it was believed that a wizard could be killed in no other way), is so widely spread that Scott seems to have accepted it as an historic fact. [Scott's *MINSTRELSY*, Ballantyne's edition, Vol. IV.]



**LORD SCALES**





## Lord Scales

Lord Randal lay in low prison,

He looked against the wa':

Gin the big wa' stanes were linen bands,

I'd win well through them a'. -

Lord Randal sat by a low lattice,

He looked against the sea:

Gin the foul hid-straws were bonny ships,

I wot well wad I be. -

Lord Randal stood by a strang window,

He looked against his hand:

- Gin my twa wrist-chains were humpen threads,

I'd win well to the oand.

- Ye'll take the rings frae my fingers,

The silk kerts frae my hair:

Ye'll gie them to the bonny knight

That cries on me sae sair.

Ye'll take the gowd bands frae my back,

The covers frae my bed:

Ye'll gie them to the Lord Randal,





## LORD SCALES

### A BALLAD

Lord Randal lay in low prison,  
He looked against the wa';  
Gin the big wa' stanes were linen bands,  
I'd win weel through them a'.

Lord Randal sat by a low lattice,  
He looked against the sea;  
Gin the foul bed straws were bonny ships,  
I wot weel wad I be.

Lord Randal stood by a strang window  
He looked against his hand;  
Gin my twa wrist chains were hempen threads,  
I'd win weel to the sand.

Ye'll take the rings frae my fingers,  
The silk knot frae my hair :  
Ye'll gie them to the bonny knight  
That cries on me sae sair.

Ye'll take the gowd bands frae my back,  
The covers frae my bed ;  
Ye'll gie them to the Lord Randal,  
To put beneath his head.

Hae silk into your hands, Randal,  
And gowd twine to your feet :  
And braw pillows about your head  
To keep your lang hair sweet.

For the rain rins through the rank bed straw,  
And the wet drips in the wa' ;  
And the wee red worms in this prison  
Wad gar your gowd hair fa'.

I had liefer hae my ain twa hands,  
And keep my body cold ;  
I had liefer hae my own twa feet  
Than two sic shoon of gold.

But I had liefer hae my lady's mouth  
Than the silk and the siller bands;  
But I had liefer hae her sweet body  
Than a' the gowd in land.

I had liefer kiss my lady dead  
Than a live woman should kiss me:  
I had liefer hae my lady dead  
Than a fair woman's live body.

O ye'se hae twine o' gowd for hemp,  
And twine o' silk for thread;  
And ye shall hae her fair body,  
But no' her body dead.

She's loosed the knot upon his back,  
The knot upon his throat:  
She's clad him with a suit of samite,  
And red silk to his coat.

She's washed him well wi' sweet waters,  
Put spice into his hair;  
She's set his feet in a narrow side chamber,  
Upon a stideway stair.

He's ta'en him to her, Lady Helen,  
Where she sat by a bed,  
The least cloth upon her body,  
It was of the noble red.

The insides of her bed curtains,  
The gold was gone them through;  
The outsides of her bed curtains,  
They were full merry and blue.

The silk side of her bed pillows,  
It was of the summer green;  
The gold was bound in her gold hair,  
That now should tell them twa between.

O came ye for my lord's land,  
Or for my lord's fee;  
Or came ye for my lord's hate,  
Or yet for love of me?

O gin ye come like a land robber,  
For soon shall ye hang;  
But gin ye come like a woman's lover,  
Full sweetly ye shall gang.

O it was never for no hate,  
For lord's love nor for fee :  
But a' the weird that is me on  
It was a' for your body.

Gin ye set nae scorn by me, Randal,  
To dree a weird and a pain,  
It's no Lord Scales my auld husband  
That shall depart us twain.

Gin this be sooth of you, Randal,  
That ye have good will to play ;  
It's no Lord Scales my auld husband  
Shall be better of us tway.

For I hae reapers to the land,  
And sailors to the sea ;  
And I hae maidens to my bower  
That wait by three and three ;  
And it's no Lord Scales my auld husband  
Shall part my will and me.

The first draw rapes upon the ship  
Between the sea and the sea sand ;  
The neist they lie in the lang corn,  
Wi' the reaphooks to their hand ;  
And between the lang beds and the wa',  
It's there the maidens stand.

She's had him to her bonnie bed,  
She's laid it warm and wide ;  
He's clipped that lady by the middle waist,  
And by the middle side.

There was neither light nor fire them by,  
And they twain were set to sleep,  
When she's turned her chin to the pillow side  
Made her a space to weep.

He kissed her on her fair twa breasts,  
And hard upon her chin ;  
He's kissed her by her white halse-bane  
The little salt tears fell in.

The small tears fell about her face  
Between her lips and his ;  
From side to side of her gold hair  
Her face was full sad to kiss.



Lie down, lie down now, Lady Helen,  
Lie still into my hand ;  
I wadna gie ane o' the pillow-beres  
For ten measures of land.

Lie still into my arms, Helen,  
Betwixen sheet and sheet :  
I wadna gie ane o' the cods of silk  
For ten measures of wheat.

Lie back into mine arms, Helen,  
The gold side of the bed ;  
I wadna gie ane o' thy kaims o' lammer  
For the gold on the queen's head.

It's I lie saft the night, Randal,  
With my head against your face ;  
But gin ye had slept in my stables,  
It had been the sweeter place.

It's I lie saft the night, Randal,  
But ye'll lie hard the morn ;  
For I hear a mouse rin by the straw,  
And a bird rin by the corn.

O whatten a bird is that, Helen,  
I wad fain ken what it ails?  
It's an auld bird and an ill, Randal,  
Gin it be no Lord Scales.—

Then in and came her auld husband,  
I wot a fu' lean bird was he;  
It's wake ye or sleep ye now, madame,  
Ye'se gar mak room for me.

O are ye sick the night, Lord Scales,  
In the head or else the side?  
Or are ye fain to sleep, Lord Scales,  
For the fear ye have to ride?

Randal's taen out her girdle knife,  
He's stricken him amang his een;  
It was mair for the lady's love  
Than it was for his proper teen.

Out came a' her bower maidens,  
In their night smocks and night vails;  
It was a' for sorrow of their lady,  
It was naething for Lord Scales.



Out came a' her bower maidens,  
In their sma' coats green and white ;  
With a red rose wrought for the left breast,  
And a rose wrought for the right.

Lord Scales had on a goodly coat,  
It was a' bound wi' steel thickly ;  
Lord Randal had but a little shirt  
Between the wind and his body.

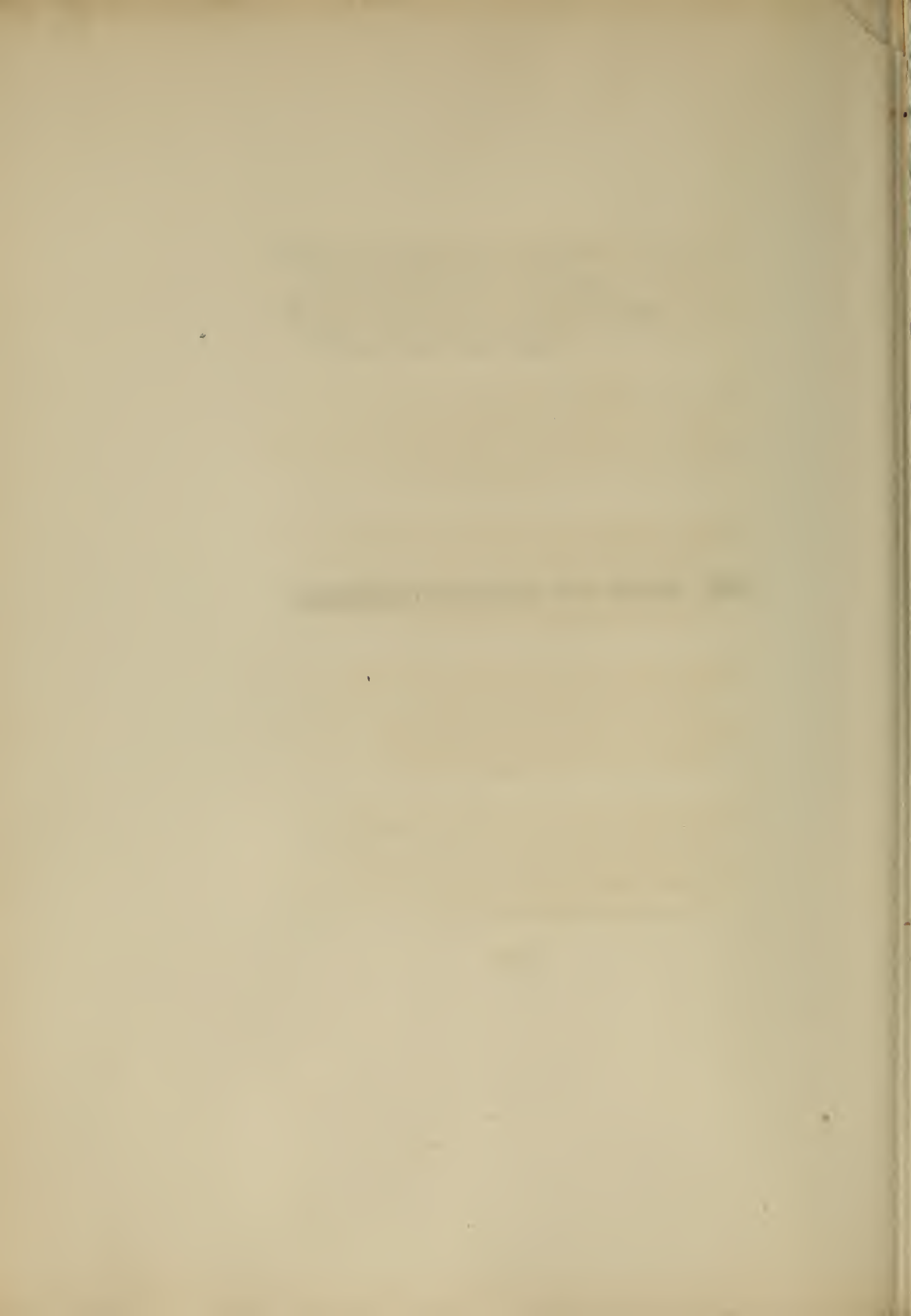
The first good straik Lord Randal strak,  
The red blood sprang upon his face ;  
It was mair for his lady's love  
Than it was for her lord's grace.

The neist good straik Lord Randal strak,  
The bright blood sprang upon his nails ;  
It was mair for love of Lady Helen  
Than pity of Lord Scales.

Lord Scales he strak a fu' straight straik,  
But Randal strak a sair ;  
Lord Scales had a little joy of it,  
But Lady Helen had mair.

Gar set my ships into the sea  
And my hooks into the corn;  
For gin I have lost a man the night,  
I'll get a man the morn.

**THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH**



## THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH

### A BALLAD

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestoneheugh  
With gold across her hair ;  
For every plait was on her head,  
I wot a gold piece was there.

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestoneheugh  
With gold across her head ;  
The green gown on her fair body  
Was woven with gold thread.

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestoneheugh  
Wi' silk below her breast ;  
The best pearl in the queen's girdle  
Was lesser than her least.

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestoneheugh  
With silk upon her feet ;  
The seams were sewn wi' cloth of scarlet  
To keep them frae the weat.

“ O wha will keep the keys for me  
Until the lord be hame?  
Or wha will ca' his kye for me,  
To see gin ony be lame? ”

She hadna bided a month but three  
With silk bands to her side,  
When word is come to Lady Helen  
To meet her father's ae new bride.

“ Ye'll bring the owsen and the sheep to stall,  
Ye'll bring the kye to stand ;  
Ye'll set the first key in my girdle,  
The neist key at my hand.”

“ But gin he has wedded a witch woman  
To work sic teen on me,  
I'll come nae mair to Spindlestoneheugh  
Till green grow in a dry tree.

And she's done on her braw girdle,  
Between the sun and moon;  
And she's done on her kaims of gold,  
Her gold gown and her shoon.

She's tied her hair in three witch knots,  
I wot, abune her bonny een;  
And for her hair and her body,  
I wot she might have been a queen.

"I wish the sickle was in the rye,  
And the rye was ower my head;  
And aye the next rose I shall gather,  
I wish the white may be the red."

She's tane the keys intil her hands  
Between the red sun and the moon;  
The rain ran down upon the grass,  
And stained in her silk shoon.

She's tane the keys to her girdle-tie  
Between the warm sun and the weet;  
The rain that was between the grass and rye,  
Ran down upon her feet.



“ O whatten a burd is yonder burd  
That shines about her head? ”  
“ It is but Helen my ae daughter  
Has clad hersell wi’ red.”

“ O where gat she thae stones of price,  
The warst might serve a queen? ”  
“ It is but for the summer season  
She’s clad hersell wi’ green.”

Lady Helen knelt upon her knees,  
She knelt upon her yellow hair ;  
“ Hae back your keys, my dear father,  
God give you weel to fare.”

Lady Helen knelt into the dust,  
She knelt upon the roadway stane ;  
“ And God you keep, madame, my mither,  
As I shall be your aim.”

Out then spak the new-come bride,  
I wot she spak wi’ pain and care ;  
“ O some hae gold to weave, Helen,  
And some hae gold to wear.”



Out then spak the witch-mother,  
I wot she spak fu' little worth;  
" Look where my saddle sits, Helen,  
" Ye'll stand against the saddle-girth."

She's tane the red kaims frae her hair,  
The red shoon frae her feet;  
She's set her face to the saddle stirrup,  
That nane should hear her greet.

And aye she ran, and weel she ran  
Till her sides were waxen sair;  
And the sun that was upon the ways  
Had burnt her through her hair.

They hadna ridden a mile but three  
When she was fain to bide;  
For the blood was come upon her feet  
And the pain upon her side.

And whiles she ran, and whiles she grat,  
In the warm sun and the cold,  
Till they came to the bonny castle  
Was bigged upon with gold.

“ O see ye not thae towers, Helen,  
Where ye gat meat and wine?  
It's I maun ligg in the braw bride-chamber,  
And ye maun ligg wi' swine.

“ O see ye not thae halls, Helen,  
Where ye gat silk to wear?  
It's I shall hae the gold gowns on,  
When your body is bare.”

“ O ye'll sit in the braw guest-chamber,  
And ye'll drink white and red ;  
But ye'll gar them gie me the washing water,  
The meats and the broken bread? ”

“ Ye'll get nae chine o' the broken loaves,  
The white bread wi' the brown ;  
Ye'll drink of the rain and the puddle water  
My maids shall cast ye down.”

“ O ye'll sit in the braw guest-chamber  
Wi' the gowd braids on your hair ;  
But ye'll gie me a poor coat and a smock  
For my body to wear?

“ O I shall ligg i’ the trodden straw,  
And ye in a gold bride-bed ;  
But ye’ll gie me a claith to hap my feet,  
And a claith to hap my head? ”

“ Ye’ll get no claith to hap you in,  
Ye’ll get no coats of me ;  
Ye’ll get nae mair but a riven smock  
To wear on your body.”

And she’s ate of the foul swine’s meat  
With her saft lips and fine ;  
She’s put her mouth to the rank water,  
Was poured amang the swine.

Never ae word spak Lady Helen,  
Never ae word but twa ;  
“ O gin my mither had hands to help,  
I wad be weel holpen awa’.”

Never ae word spak Lady Helen,  
Never ae word but three :  
“ O gin my mither had lips to kiss,  
Sae weel she wad kiss me!

“ She wad kiss me on my ravelled hair,  
The foul cheek and the chin ;  
She wad kiss me on the weary mouth,  
Where the rank water gaed in.”

Out then came the witch mother :  
“ What ails ye now to greet?  
Here’s grass to hap ye dry, Helen,  
And straw to hap ye sweet.”

The rain fell frae her feet and hands,  
Frae her lang hair and fine :  
“ What ails ye at the baked meats, Helen,  
The brown wheat bread and the wine? ”

She’s turned her by the waist about,  
She’s turned her by the knee ;  
She’s witched her body to a laidley worm,  
A laidley worm to be.

“ The red fruit shall grow in green river water,  
And green grass in the wet sea,  
Ere ye shall come to a fair woman,  
A fair woman to be.”

And she's garr'd bigg her seven swine-brows,  
She's made them wide and lang;  
She's tane the kail and the meal pocks  
That the foul worm might feed amang.

Aye she roupit and aye she croupit  
And aye she soupit the mair;  
And for the breath of her laidley mouth  
The sweet land stank fu' sair.

Word is come to Lady Helen's brother,  
In God's town where he lay,  
His father had gatten a braw new bride  
And his sister was stown away.

Word is come to Lord Richard,  
Where he was in God's land,  
There were nine men out of the north  
Would fain be to his hand.

" Whatten word is this, ye good sailors,  
This word ye hae to me?  
Gin it be a word of the good land,  
A dear word it maun be."

“ O there is a worm in Spindlestoneheugh,  
A laidley worm to see ;  
It has the tongue of a maid-woman,  
And a worm's foul body.

“ For nine miles out of Spindlestoneheugh  
Of grass and rye there is nae routh ;  
There is sma' routh of the good red corn,  
For the breath of her rank mouth.”

“ Whatten word is this, ye carlish caitives?  
For this word ye hae to me,  
There shall never meat come in my mouth  
Till I be put to sea.”

And he's garr'd bigg him a fu' fair ship,  
He's biggit it a' of the rowan tree ;  
It was neither hasped wi' gowd nor airn,  
To haud it frae the sea.

It was neither hasped wi' gowd nor airn,  
Nor yet wi' siller wan ;  
But a' the wood it was biggit wi'  
Was of the white rowan.



"There is a wum in Spindlestonhough,  
A laidley wum to see;

It has the tongue of a maid woman,  
And a wum's foul body.

"For mine <sup>smell</sup> ~~bag~~ out of Spindlestonhough  
Of grass & rye there is nae mouth;

There is nae mouth of the good red corn,  
For the breath of her rank mouth."

"But then word is this, ye carlish caitives?  
~~There's~~ <sup>For this</sup> word ye hae to me;

There shall never meat come in my mouth  
Till I be put to sea."

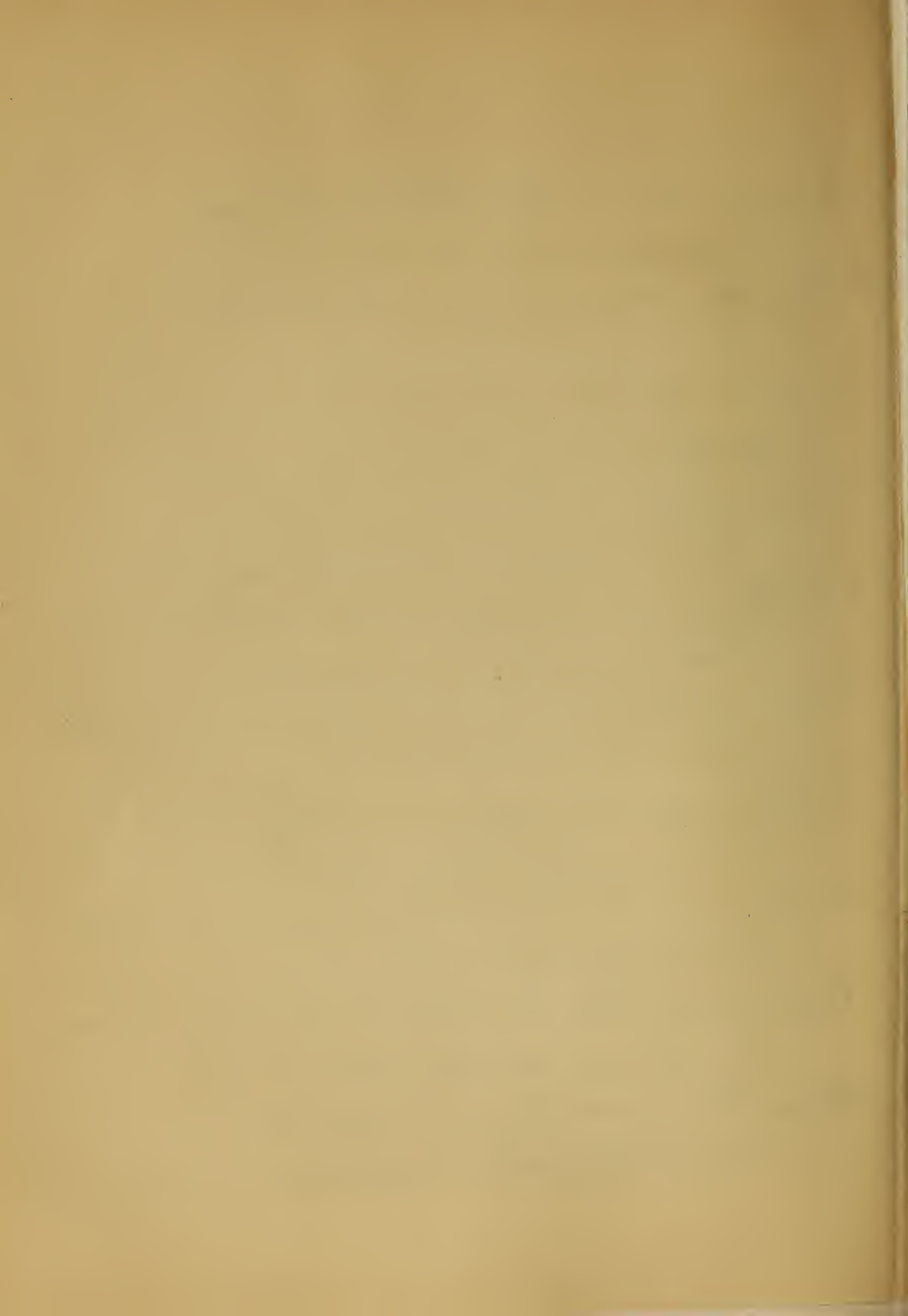
And he's garr'd bigg him a <sup>fu' fair</sup> ~~brandy~~ slip,

His biggit it o' the rowan tree;

It was neither hatched wi' gowd nor air,  
So hield it frae the sea.

It was neither hatched wi' gowd nor air,  
Yit get wi' siller wair.

But ~~in~~ a the wood it was biggit wi'  
It was of the white rowan.





And they sailed lang, and they sailed sair,  
And they drave ower to south;  
And a wind was in the ship's side,  
And a wind in the ship's mouth.

And when he came by Spindlestoneheugh,  
He's tane the vervein in his hand;  
"Now God have heed of the fair ship,  
For we must row to land."

"Have pity of us, O Lord Richard,  
For we dare no further gang."  
"Gin I may come by a goodly gallows,  
The best of ye a' shall hang."

But when he saw the seven swine trows,  
He weened a sair thing to have seen;  
And when he saw the laidley worm  
The tears brast ower in his een.

"O gin ye'll kiss my laidley mouth  
For the love of God's body,  
I winna do ye scaith, brother,  
Though I be a foul thing to see."

He's put his mouth to her laidley mouth,  
He's kissed her once and twice ;  
" I had liever lose God's dear body  
Than kiss this foul worm thrice."

He's put his mouth to her laidley mouth,  
He's kissed her kisses three ;  
The flesh fell frae her laidley mouth  
And frae her rank body ;  
And it was but his sister Helen  
Stood at Lord Richard's knee.

She was clad all in the fair red samite,  
Her mouth was red and fair ;  
There was nae burd in the good land  
That had such yellow hair.

He's tane him to the witch mother  
That sat by her bairn's bed ;  
The gold was gone in her grey hair,  
Her face was heavy and red.

“ O wae be wi' you, ye ill woman,  
And the young bairn at your knee ;  
There's never a bairn shall die abed  
That comes of your body.”

“ Now God you save, my fair brother,  
For his dear body that was dead ;  
Now God you save and maiden Mary,  
That kept me of her maidenhead.”

My dear Sir,  
I have just received your letter of the 10th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well.  
I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. H. [Signature]

I have also received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well.  
I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. H. [Signature]

I have also received your letter of the 14th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well.  
I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. H. [Signature]

I have also received your letter of the 16th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well.  
I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. H. [Signature]

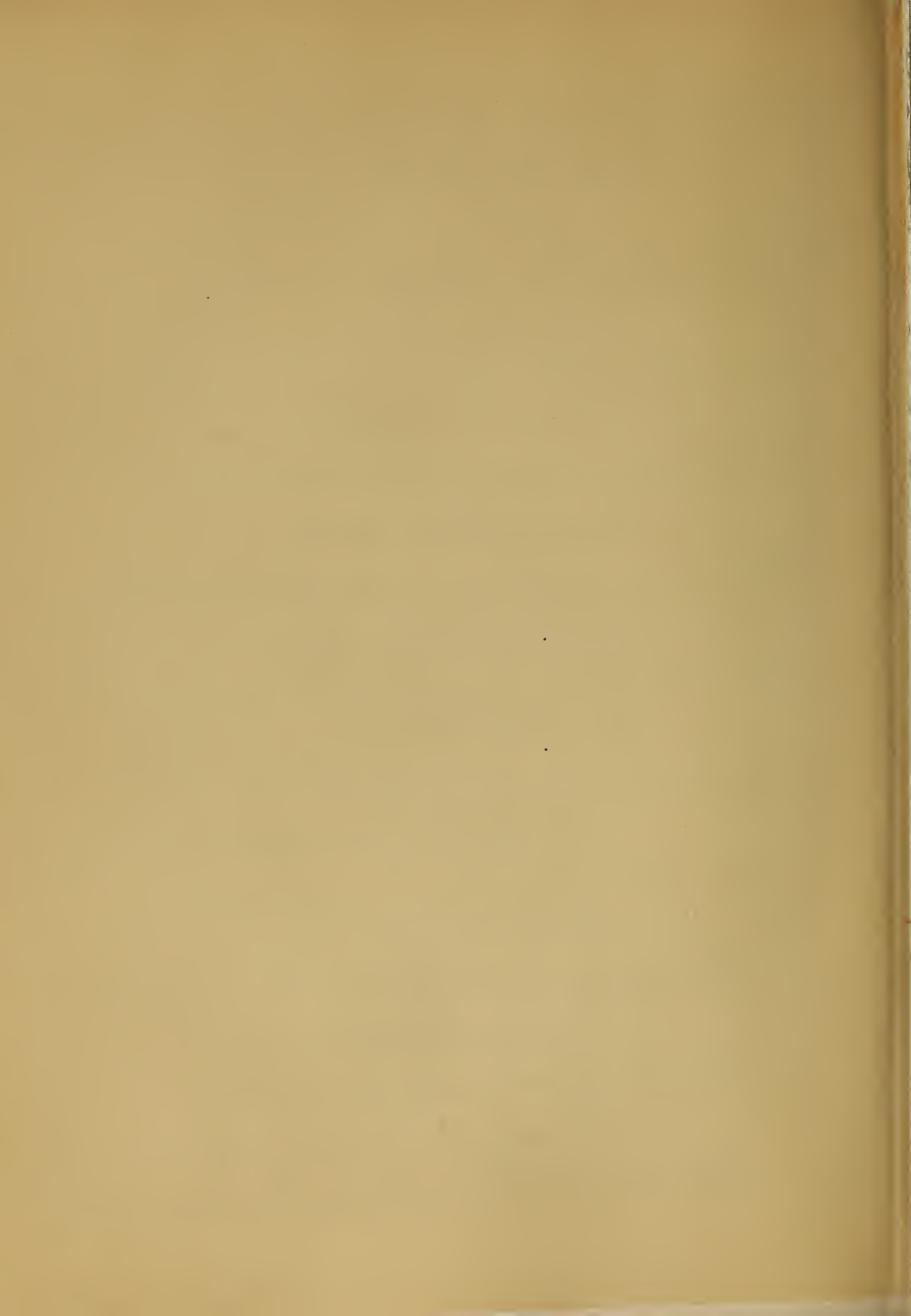
BURD MARGARET



## Burd Margaret.

Whoa will get me wheaten bread  
And whoa will get me wine?  
And whoa will build me a gold cradle  
To rock this child of mine?  
There's some will drink of bitter wine,  
Her eat of bitter bread;  
There's none will ca' me a clean maiden  
When my body is dead.  
Hae nith ~~shoon~~ <sup>gown</sup> ~~neigun~~ <sup>up</sup> come ~~on~~ my feet,  
Hae gold ~~threads~~ <sup>in</sup> my hair;  
My brothers ~~ruite~~ <sup>ruin</sup> me on the earth,  
Where ~~he~~ <sup>nae</sup> shall kiss ~~me~~ <sup>nae</sup> anair.  
She hild her hands in the wan water  
Till the finger were a' red.  
Her face was like a fair burd's face  
That has her maidenhead.  
She's streekit the water on her hair,  
This signet it were her clair,  
She's streekit the water on her lips







## BURD MARGARET

### A BALLAD

“ O wha will get me wheaten bread  
And wha will get me wine?  
And wha will build me a gold cradle  
To rock this child of mine?

“ There's nane will drink of bitter wine,  
Nor eat of bitter bread ;  
There's nane will ca' me a clean maiden  
When my body is dead.

“ Nae silk maun come upon my feet,  
Nae gowd into my hair ;  
My brothers smite me on the mouth,  
Where nae man shall kiss mair.”

She held her hands in the wan water  
Till the fingers were a' red ;  
Her face was like nae fair burd's face  
That has her maidenhead.

She's streekit the water on her hair,  
She's signed it owre her chin,  
She's streekit the water on her lips  
To let the draps gang in.

The tears ran through her fair sma' mouth ;  
The white bones small and thin  
Were waxen sharper in her lang throat,  
And in her wrist and chin.

" Gin my mither had wist o' this  
When she was left wi' me,  
I wot these arms that are waxen lean  
Had ne'er gaun round a man's body.

" Gin my mither had dreamed a dream  
That sic a kail should fall on me,  
She had bound me between her smock and her kirtle,  
And cast me ower the sea.

“ She had row’d me between her smock and her kirtle,  
Let me to swim or sink ;  
And I had drunken o’ the saut water  
Instead of tears to drink.

“ The bairn that is waxen me within,  
It is waxen a pain to me ;  
But weel lie he and ever weel  
That made my bairn’s body.

“ The white that was in my twa brows,  
I wot it is waxen red ;  
But weel lie he and ever weel  
That had my maidenhead.

“ O weel be to the fair red roses  
Stood high against my chin ;  
But ill be to the good green leaves,  
For they were half the sin.

“ O weel be to the little bird  
Sang low against my knee ;  
But ill be to my fause nourice,  
She had sma’ reck of me.

“ O weel be to the fair red roses  
    Stood high against my face ;  
But ill be to the bonny rowan,  
    I wish it never grace.”

Burd Margaret lay in the rank water-grass  
    By the fairest ford in Tyne ;  
And between the grass and the aspen leaf,  
    She saw their armour shine.

Burd Margaret lay in the low bracken  
    That was sae green on Tyne ;  
And between the reed and the wan willow,  
    She saw the clean steel shine.

The first of them had fair Milan coats,  
    The second had but pikes and jacks ;  
The third had coats of fair scarlet,  
    And gold across their caps.

There were three and three wi' bits of steel,  
    And three and three wi' siller fine,  
And three and three wi' bits of gold,  
    Was red as fair new wine.

“ Whatten men be these that rin,” she said,  
“ Or whatten men be these that ride?  
Either ye be theives frae the north border,  
Or men that look a bride.”

“ Gin I be rid frae the north border  
And my braw bride won south,  
I’ll gar her clip me round the body  
And kiss me on the mouth.”

“ I think ye be nae knight,” she said,  
“ Nae knight that wons about ;  
There was never man but a devil  
That had sae long a snout.

“ Gin I should kiss your mouth,” she said,  
“ I wis I had kissed a loon;  
I think ye be some clouted carter,  
Albeit ye wear steel shoon.”

“ I am Lord Hugh of Burnieshaw,  
Ye may weel ken the face o’ me ;  
And I wad hae back the bonnie lad bairn  
That I left here wi’ thee.”

“ Gin ye be Hughie of Burnieshaw,  
As I trow a better may have been,  
Tell me what words I said to you,  
When the rowans were green.”

“ O first ye pu’d the green berry,  
And syne ye pu’d the red ;  
And the first word that ever ye spak  
Was to complain your maidenhead.

“ O first ye pu’d the red hollin,  
And syne ye pu’d the green :  
And the first word ye spak to me  
Ye grat fu’ sair between.”

“ Gin ye be Hughie of Burnieshaw,  
As I think weel ye’ll never be,  
Here have ye back your bonny lad bairn,  
That sair has troubled me.”

She’s caught her hand to his bridle-rein,  
Held up her mouth to touch his chin ;  
“ Ye garred me pu’ the girdle straight  
That the fair knave bairn was in.”



“ What needs ye flur and mock, Margaret?  
What needs ye scorn at me?  
Ye never gat harm of your fause brothers,  
But ye gat aye the mair gude o’ me.”

He’s put his hands to her body,  
He’s laid her thwart his selle;  
And ye that hae gotten a bonny sitter,  
Gar keep the neist yoursell.

Aye they rode weel, and aye better,  
Until the moon was nigh to sheen;  
And aye the tears ran in her breast,  
And aye in the gold between.

“ O whether is yon a cry of carlies,  
Or men that cry on me? ”  
“ Bide still, bide still now, Burd Margaret,  
For ye hear naething but the sea.”

“ O whatten is yonder noise,” she said,  
“ That I hear cry on us behind? ”  
“ Haud by my sleeve now, Burd Margaret,  
For ye hear naething but the wind.”



Aye they rode weel, and aye better,  
Until the moon was waxen weak;  
And aye she laid her face to his,  
And her tears ran by his cheek.

Aye when he kissed her bonny een,  
I wot they grat fu' sair;  
Aye when she laid her head to his,  
I wot the tears ran through his hair.

Aye they rode slow, and aye slower,  
Till the moon's time was a' done;  
Between the road and the saddle  
She thought to bear a son.

There she saw her first brother,  
Stood back to a fair tree;  
Said "Grace go with our bonny sister  
To ride in sic a companie."

Said "Grace go with our bonnie sister,  
To wear her gown aside;  
It is not meet for a good woman  
To set her girdle wide."

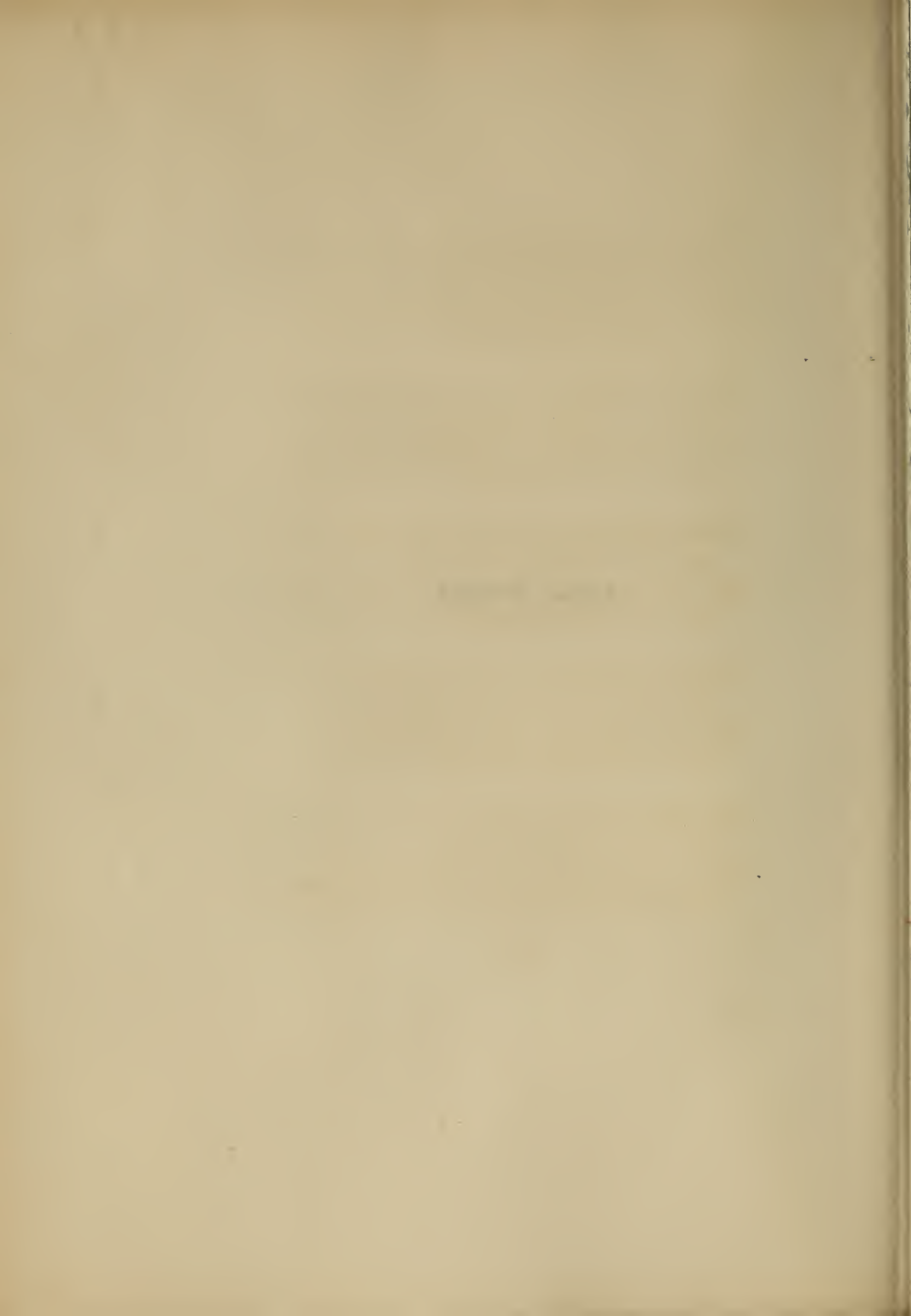
He's stricken the first across the neck,  
Shorn clean his beard and hair;  
" Now haud ye weel, my fair brother,  
Ye'se get of me nae mair."

He's cloven the second through the chin,  
The third upon the knee;  
" Now haud ye weel, my three brothers,  
Ye'se get nae mair of me."

They set her in a fair bride-bed,  
Full glad she was the morn;  
And between the silk and the braw geld claith,  
The fair knave bairn was born.



**EARL ROBERT**



## EARL ROBERT

### A BALLAD

O some ride east and some ride north,  
And some ride west and south ;  
But the ae best gate that ever I rade  
Was a' for her red mouth.

O some wear blue and bonny scarlet,  
And some wear green and red ;  
And it's a' for love of her yellow hair  
I'll wear but golden thread.

Gin this be Annie of Waterswa'  
That gars ye speak sae hie,  
There's nae man of your name, Earl Robert,  
Shall get her fair body.

O when he came by Waterswa',  
The rain was sair and strang;  
Fair Annie sat in a bower-window,  
And her gold hair was grown lang.

Gin I might swim to ye, Robert,  
I wad never spare for gloves or gown;  
I wad never spare for the cold water,  
But I have sore fear to drown.

Now God thee hold, thou fair Annie,  
The wa's are hard to leap;  
The water is ill to swim, Annie,  
And the brigg is ill to keep.

Gin I should open to ye, Robert,  
I wis it were open shame:  
It were great pity of me, Robert,  
For I gang but sick and lame.

O twice I cuttit the silk string through  
That was upon my back;  
And twice I cuttit the gown away  
That wadn'a haud me slack.



It's ill wi' me the night, Robert,  
It's weel wi' my leman ;  
For the wine that comes in my fingers,  
I spill it on my han' ;  
And the meat that's in my very mouth,  
I wot it feeds a man.

Gin I may win to ye, Annie,  
I think ye'll keep me weel,  
I were the liefer of you, Robert,  
But for the doors of shut steel.\*

Gin I may win to ye, Annie,  
The tane o' us should weel fare.  
There's three men keep the ways, Robert,  
Between the gate and the water-stair.

I wot the night there's deep water,  
Runs red upon the brim :  
It's full between the wa's, Annie,  
This were but ill to swim.

\*In the Manuscript this stanza has been lightly struck through with a pen. Probably the author intended to delete it.

There's rain the night in Carrilees,  
I wot the rain is rank ;  
There be twa fathoms of strang water  
Between it bank and bank.

But he's rid out through Carrilees' brow,  
I wot, baith wet and wan ;  
Annie lay in her chamber-window,  
She was a glad woman.

Between the gate and the water-stair  
He made him room to stand ;  
The wet ran frae his knees and feet,  
It ran upon his hand.

And he's won through to her chamber,  
He's kissed her neist the chin :  
O gin ye'll keep me out, Annie,  
Is there ony will take me in ?

Up then gat her auld father,  
Between the wall and her bed feet ;  
Is there ony breath in your lips, Earl Robert,  
To gar a dead mouth smell sweet ?

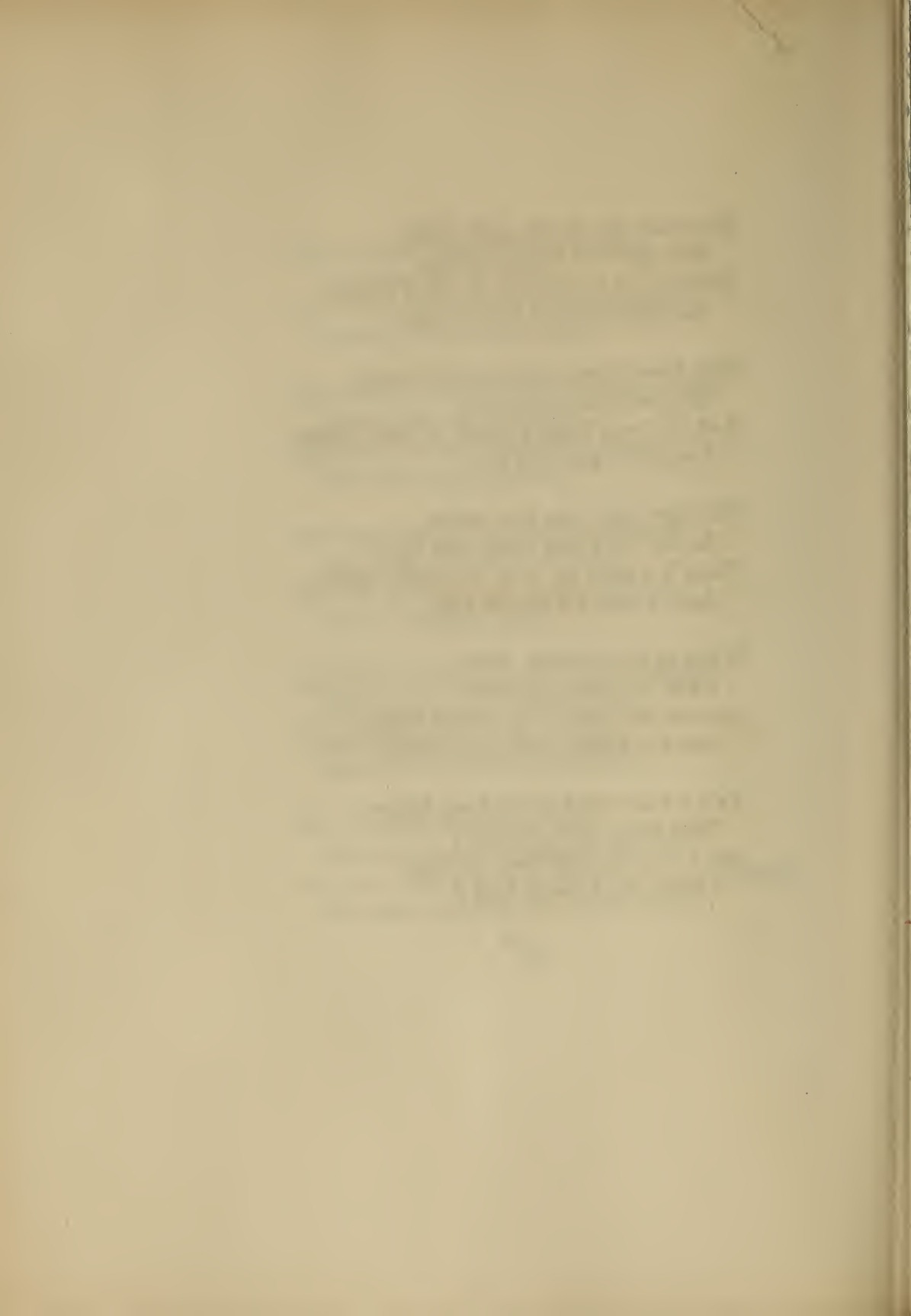
He's tane her by the gold girdle,  
He's garr'd it break atwain ;  
There's nae room here for Earl Robert,  
The ways are sae fou' o' rain.

He's tane a keen sword in his hand,  
He's set him to the wa' ;  
And the very heart's blood of Earl Robert,  
I wot he's garr'd it fa'.

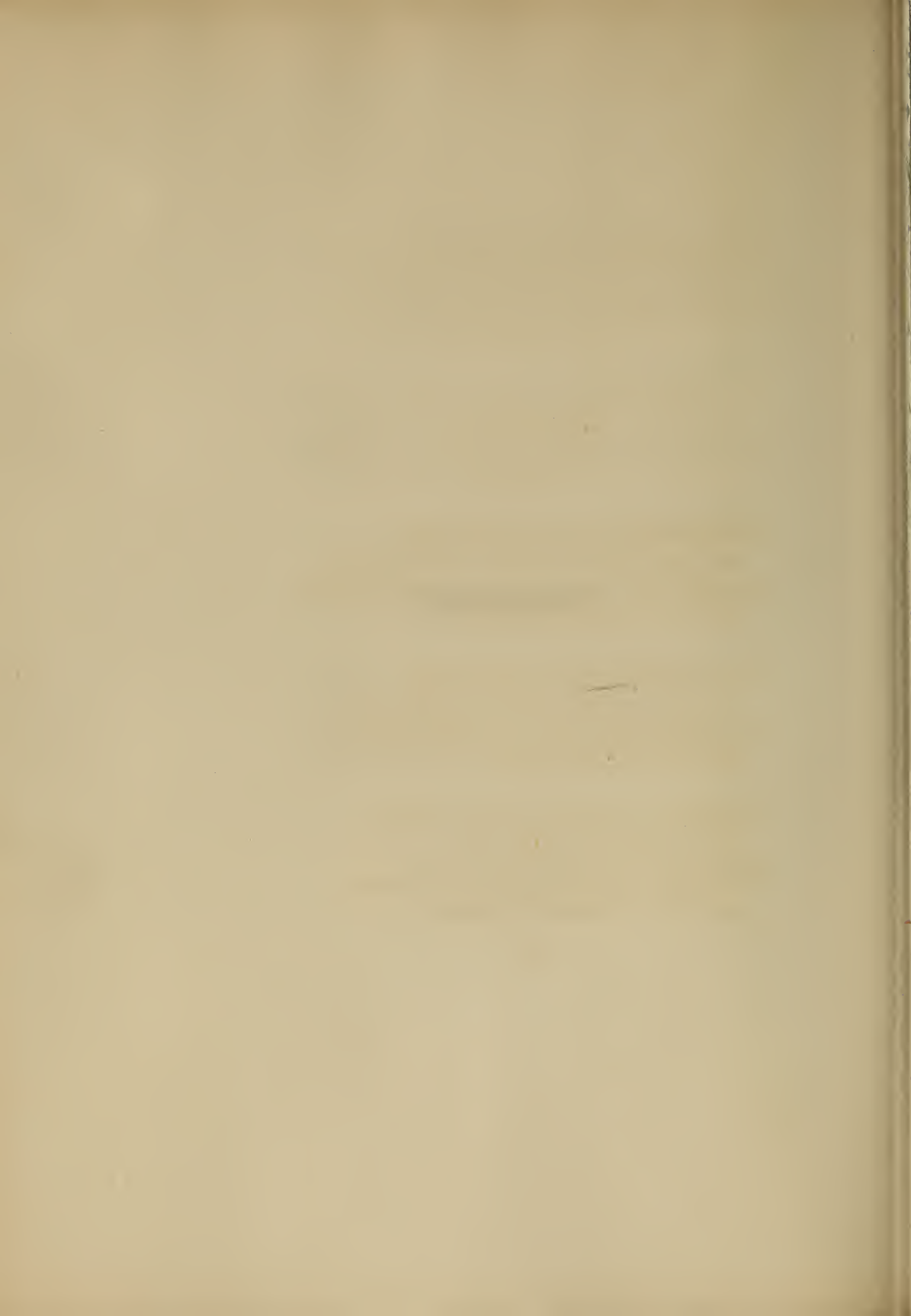
Out then spak she, fair Annie,  
At the bed's foot where she lay ;  
There's a time for you the night, father,  
And a time for us the day.

O gin ye dig na deep, father,  
I wot ye maun dig wide ;  
And set my lord to the nether hand,  
And my bairn to the green side.

Ye'll set my head to his foot, father,  
That he be neist the sun ;  
For a' that was between us twa,  
I think it's a' weel done ?



**DURIESDYKE**



## DURIESDYKE

### A BALLAD

The rain rains sair on Duriesdyke,  
Both the winter through and the spring;  
And she that will gang to get broom thereby  
She shall get an ill thing.

The rain rains sair on Duriesdyke,  
Both the winter and the summer day;  
And he that will steek his sheep thereby  
He shall go sadly away.

“ Between Crossmuir and Duriesdyke  
The fieldhead is full green;  
The shaws are thick in the fair summer,  
And three wellheads between.



“ Flower of broom is a fair flower,  
And heather is good to play.”  
O she went merry to Duriesdyke,  
But she came heavy away.

“ It's I have served you, Burd Maisry,  
These three months through and mair ;  
And the little ae kiss I gat of you,  
It pains me aye and sair.

“ This is the time of heather-blowing,  
And that was syne in the spring ;  
And the little ae leaf comes aye to red,  
And the corn to harvesting.”

The first kiss their twa mouths had,  
Sae fain she was to greet ;  
The neist kiss their twa mouths had,  
I wot she laughed fu' sweet.

“ Cover my head with a silken hood,  
My feet with a yellow claith ;  
For to stain my body wi' the dyke-water,  
God wot I were fu' laith.”

He's happit her head about wi' silk,  
Her feet with a gowden claith;  
The red sendal that was of price,  
He's laid between them baith.

The grass was low by Duriesdyke,  
The high heather was red;  
And between the grass and the high heather  
He's tane her maidenhead.

They did not kiss in a noble house,  
Nor yet in a lordly bed;  
But their mouths kissed in the high heather,  
Between the green side and the red.

"I have three sailing ships, Maisry,  
For red wheat and for wine;  
The maintopmast is a bonny mast,  
Three furlongs off to shine.

"The foremast shines like new lammer,  
The mizzenmast like steel:  
Gin ye wad sail wi' me, Maisry,  
The warst should carry ye weel."

“Gin I should sail wi’ you, Lord John,  
Out under the rocks red,  
It’s wha wad be my mither’s bower-maiden  
To hap saft her feet in bed?

“Gin I should sail wi’ you, Lord John,  
Out under the rocks white,  
There’s nane wad do her a very little ease  
To hap her left and right.”

It fell upon the midwinter,  
She gat mickle scaith and blame;  
She’s bowed hersell by the white water  
To see his ships come hame.

She’s leaned hersell against the wind,  
To see upon the middle tide;  
The faem was fallen in the running wind,  
The wind was fallen in the waves wide.

“There’s nae moon by the white water  
To do me ony good the day;  
And but this wind a little slacken,  
They shall have a sair seaway.

“ O stir not for this nied, baby,  
O stir not at my side;  
Ye’ll have the better birth, baby,  
Gin ye wad but a little bide.”

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**WESTLAND WELL**





## WESTLAND WELL

### A BALLAD

Ye maun mak' me a scarlet gown, Lord John,  
A scarlet gown to the knee ;  
It maun be sewn wi' a gowd needle,  
To mak' fit wear to me.

It maun be sewn wi' a gowd needle,  
And spun o' silk for thread ;  
And ye maun gie me a band of silk,  
To tie upon my head.  
And ye maun gie me a sheet of silk  
To put into my bed.

O wha was't made ye proud, Janet,  
Or ever ye were born?  
There's nae gowd in the land, Janet,  
Is redder than the corn.

O wha was't taught you words, Janet,  
Or wha was't learned you pride?  
There's mony a better face than yours  
Would fain lie neist my side.

O haud your tongue, Lord John o' the Mains,  
I doubt ye hae drunken wine;  
There is not a maid that wons in heaven  
Wi sic a face as mine.

Gin I were set in the high heaven,  
And God's mother were set below,  
I wad be queen of the high heaven,  
And she wad be let go.

When she cam in Lord John's bower,  
She never had kissed man:  
When she cam frae Lord John's bower,  
She was but his leman.

O ye'll gar make me a bonny bed,  
Ye'll make it warm and sweet,  
Ye'll set a pillow to my head, mither,  
And a pillow to my feet.

It fell about the middle May time  
When the apple flowers wax red,  
Her mither began to chide with her  
She kept sae lang abed.

I canna stand to walk, mither,  
But I'm just like to die,  
And wae be to your bonny bloodhound  
That bit me by the knee.

Yestreen my maids took off the sheet  
To wash i' the Westland Well,  
And lest the bonny web suld ravel,  
I set a hand mysel.

We washed the blue thread and the brown,  
The white thread and the black;  
And sae cam ben your fause bloodhound,  
And bit me in the back.

Sae sair it rent and bit, mither,  
Sae sair it bit and clang,  
And ever I hope in God, mither,  
Ye'll gar that bloodhound hang.

What's this o't now maiden Janet?  
What's this o't now? quo' she ;  
There's nae such hound that bites women,  
There's nae such langts to me.

Tell me now, Janet, she says,  
And I winna gar ye lee,  
Is this a hound's tooth or a child's shaping  
That mars your straight body?

O where your cheek was red, Janet,  
Your cheek is sick and wan ;  
And where your back was right and flat,  
It bow like a loaden man.

O where your throat was round, Janet,  
It's lean and loose by this ;  
And where your lip was sweet, Janet,  
It's grown too thin to kiss.

The blood sprang in her cheek, fair Janet,  
The blood sprang in her chin ;  
I doubt there's ane wad kiss me, mither,  
Though I be sick and thin.

About the time of moon rising  
They set her saft in bed,  
About the time of star setting  
They streekit her for dead.

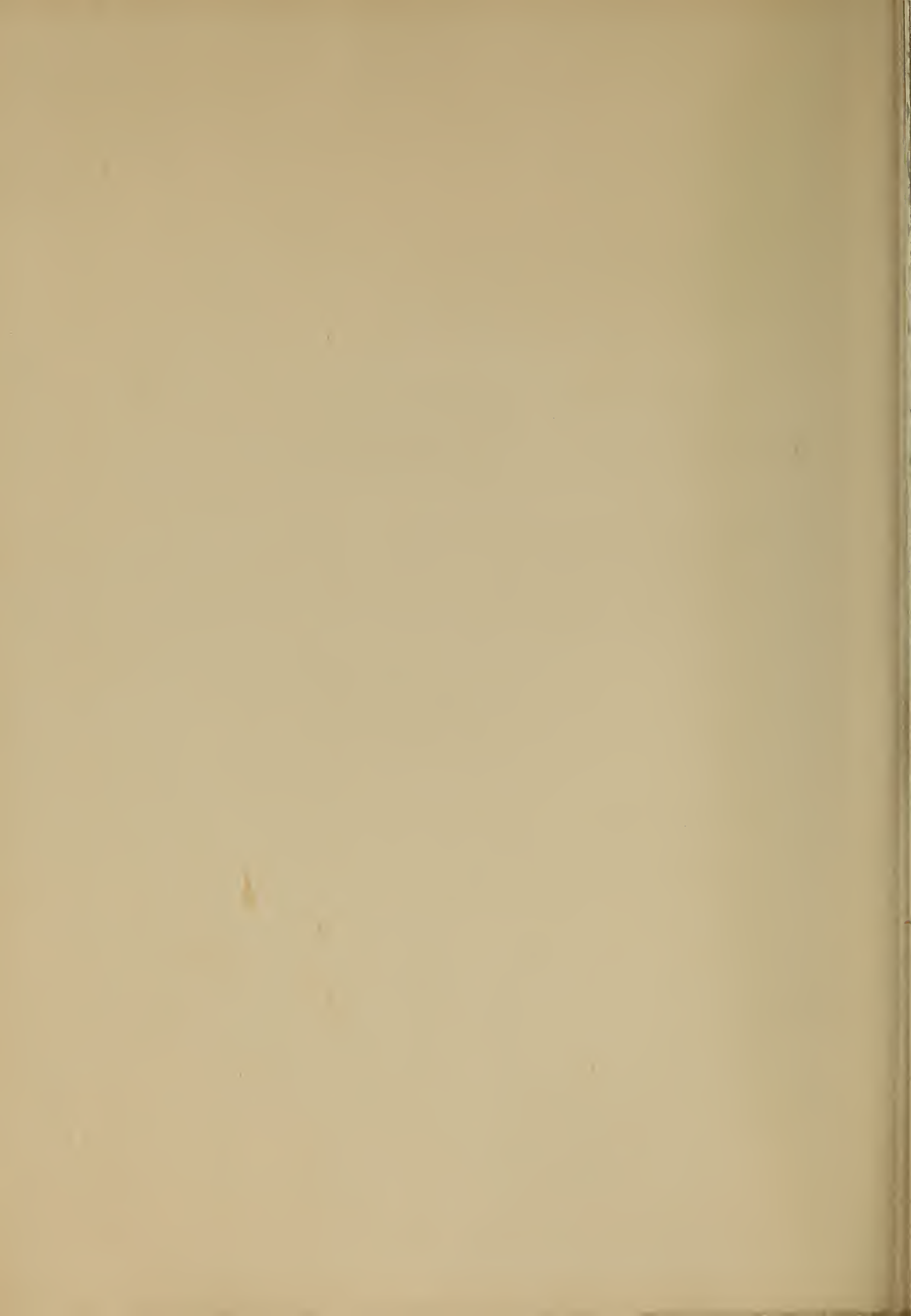
O ill be in your meat, Lord John,  
And ill be in your wine ;  
Gin the bairn be none of your getting,  
I'm sure it's none of mine.

Ill be in your bed, Lord John,  
And ill be in your way,  
Gin ye had been hangit a year ago,  
I had been the merrier May.

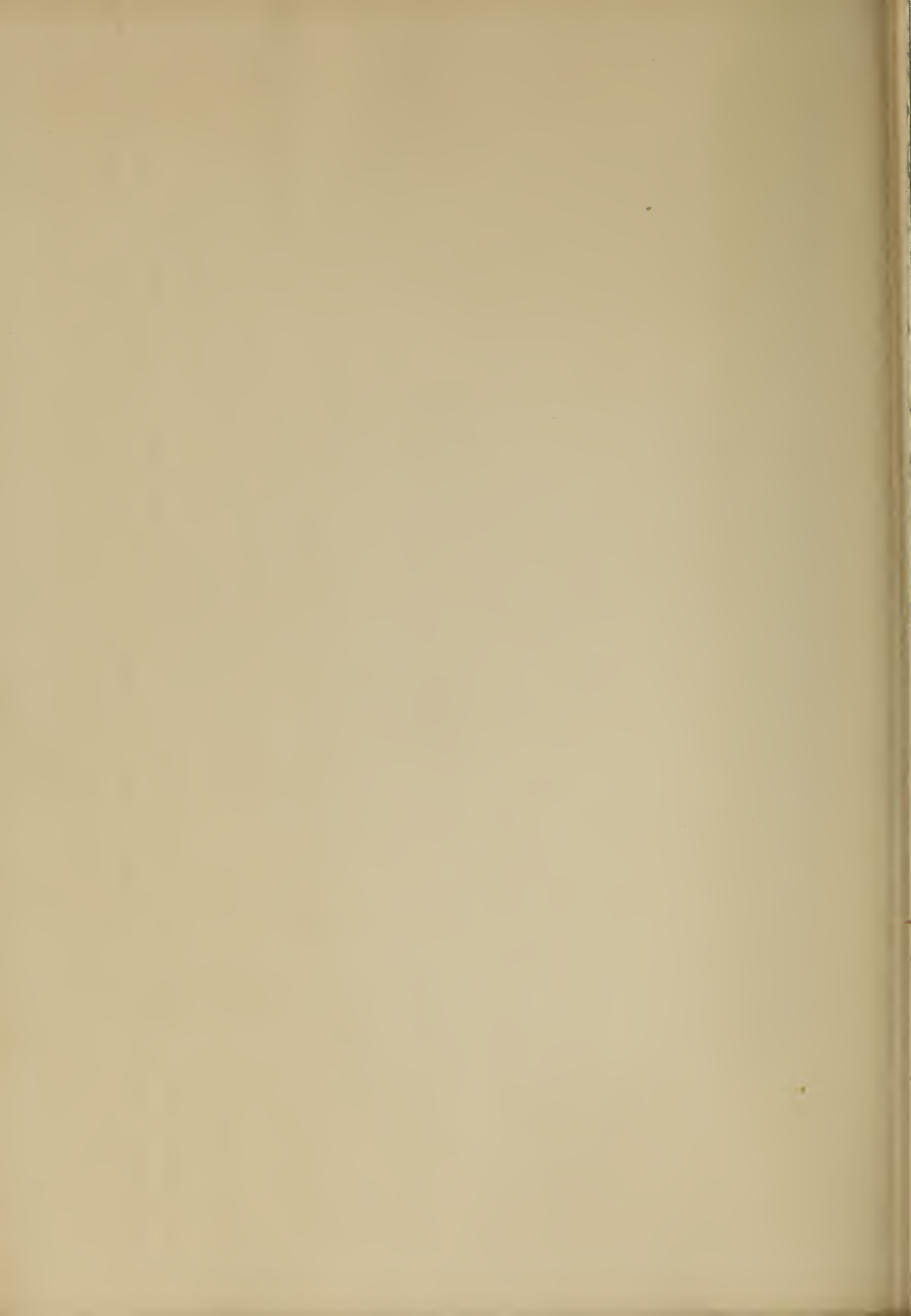
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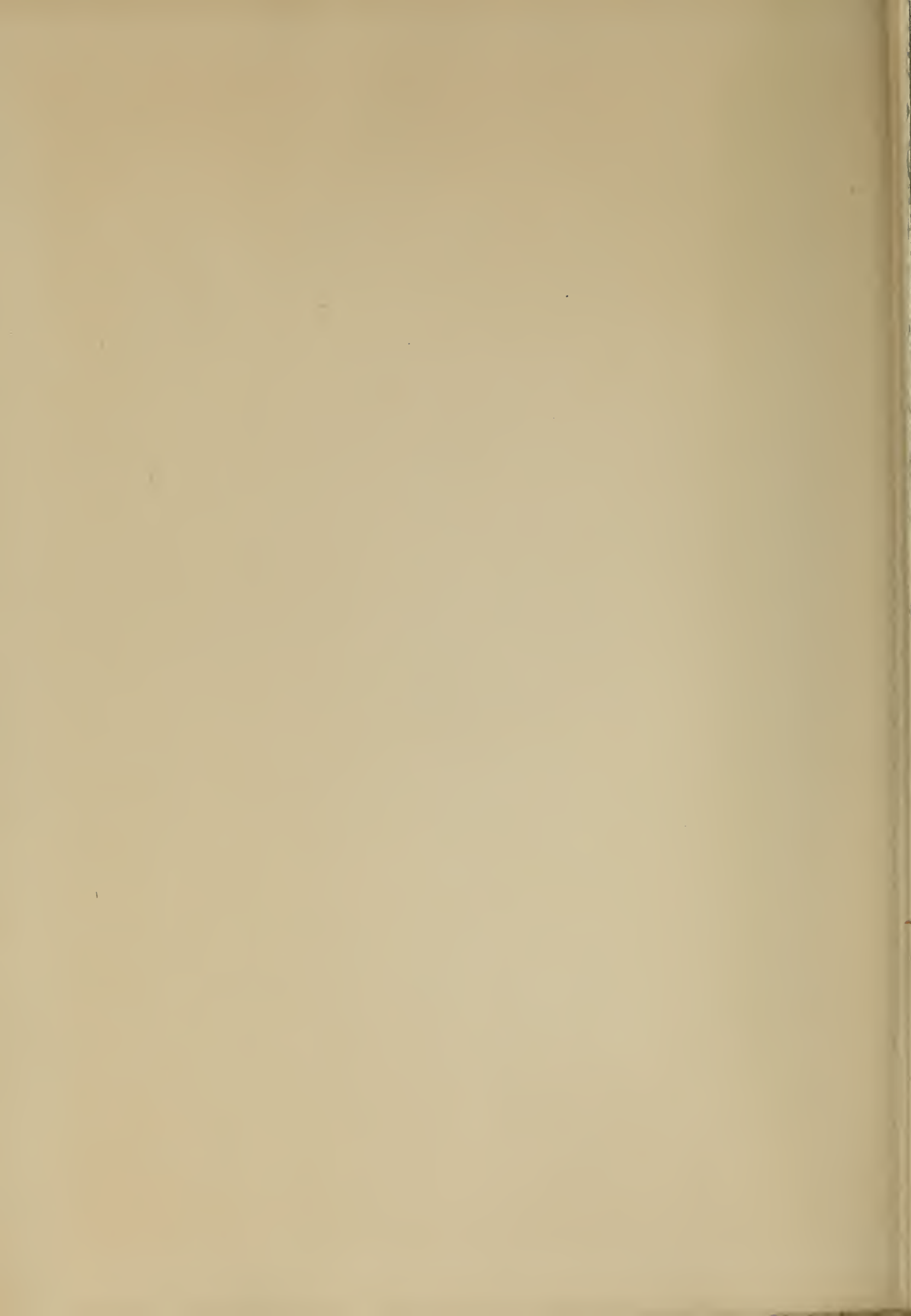














Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: May 2009

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